

**SUPPLEMENTAL REVISION
TO THE
HENNEBERRY FISHING ACCESS SITE
WALK-IN PARKING LOT DEVELOPMENT
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

BACKGROUND/PURPOSE

On October 7, 2004, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) distributed an Environmental Assessment (EA) on a proposed project to build two parking lots along the recreational frontage road adjacent to Henneberry Fishing Access Site south of Dillon, Montana. During the comment period, which ran until November 1, 2004, there were four separate comments of concern submitted regarding the Preferred Alternative identified in the EA. The common issues expressed were: 1) the concern that too many parking spaces were being proposed, and that the resulting increase in visitation numbers would compromise the “sporting value” of the area, 2) the increased visitation would put additional pressure on the fishery (“build it and they will come”), 3) the foot traffic pattern set up by the location of the north lot would disturb nesting Bald Eagles, and 4) the placement of the two parking lots would channel foot traffic down fence lines along the south and north boundaries, thus increasing the likelihood of deliberate trespass on to adjacent private property.

Because of these concerns, FWP met with adjacent landowners on-site on October 27 in an effort to discuss the perceived problems and to search for agreeable solutions. As a result of this meeting, a compromise proposal was discussed and FWP agreed to change the project location and scope and to re-distribute, for public comment, a supplemental EA revision reflecting these changes.

The information presented in the original EA of October 7, 2004 remains that of record unless otherwise changed or amended in this supplement.

ORIGINAL PROPOSAL

This proposed project would provide two constructed parking lots for up to eight vehicles each for the south parcel of Henneberry FAS. These new lots would furnish walk-in anglers and waterfowl hunters a developed, easily accessible, level and safe place to park at two different locations along the recreation road, which fronts the site on the east boundary. Currently, site users who wish to access the Beaverhead River from the recreation road have to park on the road right-of-way (ROW) and then walk in through FWP gates to the river. The ROW is steeply angled and causes vehicles to spin out when leaving. Safety issues are also a concern, especially if users park on the road shoulder. The construction of these two lots would allow users to get down off the road on level

ground and park in a safe manner, and would enable a vehicle to gain momentum before climbing the grade onto the recreation road.

REVISED PROPOSAL

The revised proposed project would provide one constructed parking area for up to seven vehicles to accommodate walk-in anglers and waterfowl hunters at the south parcel of Henneberry FAS. The new parking lot and access ramp would be built between the two existing primitive parking areas being used now (and between where the two new ones were initially proposed), and would provide a level, easily accessible and safe place to park. Currently, the two primitive parking areas being used along the recreation road right-of way are inconvenient, are causing negative resource impacts and compromise driver safety. The components of this project would include a filled/built-up access ramp off the recreation road, an irrigation ditch culvert for the access ramp crossing, a graveled parking lot with a cul-de-sac/island design, barrier rocks, livestock gate and signing.

Along with the construction of this one central parking lot, the two existing primitive right-of-way parking areas would be reclaimed and abandoned. These sites would be signed to direct users to the designated new lot and the entrances to FWP property would be re-fenced.

The new location and scope of the project outlined above reflects the compromise discussed by the adjacent landowners and FWP, and mitigates the concerns of increased visitation, increased trespass, and Bald Eagle disturbance.

CHANGES TO THE ORIGINAL EA

The original EA defined Alternative C as the “Preferred Alternative”. For the purposes of this supplemental EA, the new “Preferred Alternative” becomes Alternative E, the new proposed action. As explained above, Preferred Alternative E would propose construction of one, seven-car lot instead of the two previously proposed at their current locations. Unlike the original Alternative B, which analyzed the building of just one lot at one of the current locations, Alternative E would abandon and reclaim the two currently used primitive access/parking areas, and would move the new lot construction to a location in between the two.

There are no changes to the original Environmental Review Checklist, as all the issues and potential impacts noted and discussed in the original EA would stay the same. The two main concerns brought forth in the initial comment period, that of increased visitation and disturbance of Bald Eagles, were addressed in the original checklist. These impact issues were analyzed in the checklist on impacts on Fish/Wildlife (section 5) and on Aesthetics/Recreation (section 11). It is felt that these analyses still remain accurate and applicable to the new proposal.

Since this is a new proposed project site, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) was contacted for an examination and report regarding any revision to cultural significance and impacts. A check with SHPO resulted in the opinion “that all three sites are on the same floodplain elevation and therefore have the same low likelihood of adverse impacts to cultural resources”.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The public will be notified by way of legal notices in three local newspapers, Montana Standard, Dillon Tribune, and Bozeman Daily Chronicle and by public notice on the Fish, Wildlife & Parks webpage: <http://www.fwp.mt.gov/publicnotices>.

The public comment period will extend for thirty days following the release of the Supplemental EA. Comments will be accepted until 5:00 pm, March 23, 2005. Comments may be e-mailed to tgreason@montana.edu or written comments may be sent to the following address: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Attn: Henneberry FAS EA, 1400 South 19th Avenue, Bozeman, MT 59718

DESIGN & MAP

Attachment A – Area overview showing the original project locations and the revised (new) site location.

Attachment B – A conceptual lay out and design plan of the proposed revised site.